

up before this fall, we will truly have a number of tax incentives for winterization and conservation, alternative sources of energy, as well as improving our stocks of inventory, as we are under this bill.

I thank both the majority and minority for bringing this bill forward. I also want to compliment my colleagues who have been working so hard on this, particularly the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS), the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. CAPUANO), and of course, the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACC).I).

We have all been working hard because our constituents hurt very hard this winter. We saw prices in Rhode Island go from 99 cents a gallon to over \$2.05 a gallon in a matter of weeks. This will help reverse that trend, and this will be better for the constituents of the Northeast. And I thank my colleagues for that.

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield 3 minutes to the gentleman from Vermont (Mr. SANDERS).

Mr. SANDERS. Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman for yielding me the time.

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman from Texas (Chairman BARTON), the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. BOUCHER) the ranking member, the gentleman from Massachusetts (Mr. MARKEY), the gentleman from Maine (Mr. BALDACC), the gentleman from Rhode Island (Mr. WEYGAND), and I also want to thank the President and Secretary Richardson for their support of the consent of a Northeast home heating oil reserve.

Mr. Speaker, it is no secret that this winter the people in the Northeast were hit very, very hard by the large increase in home heating oil prices; and many of the folks in the State of Vermont in the Northeast were having a very, very difficult time paying a doubling of the price of home heating oil from just 1 year before. It was a serious crisis. It remains a crisis. And it is no secret that we were not prepared for it.

On February 4, I introduced H.R. 3608, the Home Heating Oil Price Stability Act; and in this short period of time since then, we now have 98 cosponsors, including 24 Republicans and 27 Representatives who are not from the Northeast. So this is a bipartisan piece of legislation. It is a national piece of legislation.

The bottom line is that we were caught unprepared, and the bottom line is that we have got not to be caught unprepared again. A home heating oil reserve of at least 2 million barrels, and that is the legislation included within this bill, would make certain that when the weather becomes very cold, when home heating oil prices zoom up, we will have something to call upon to control the escalating

price of home heating oil. And that is what the reserve does. So I think this is a significant step forward in controlling escalating home heating oil prices.

I would hope, as previous speakers have indicated, that we could expand the concept. Two million barrels in the Northeast is a good start. The original legislation calls for another 4.7 million barrels in the Gulf Coast, which is part of what the Strategic Petroleum Reserve is.

My understanding is that the President has the authority, in fact, to do that on his own; and I hope that he will.

The bottom line is that this is a significant step forward in preventing another spike in home heating oil in the Northeast. It will save substantial sums of money for the people in the Northeast and, in fact, for people throughout this country.

I very much thank the chairman and the ranking member and those who have made this legislation possible.

Mr. BOUCHER. Mr. Speaker, I yield myself 30 seconds.

Mr. Speaker, I use this time to commend my friend and colleague, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON), the chairman of our energy subcommittee, for his excellent work on this measure. The procedural difficulties that I referenced earlier were not of his doing. I know that, given his way, we would have had a different process and one that I think would have been somewhat more thorough.

I urge my colleagues to approve this measure. It will reauthorize the authority of the President to manage the SPR. That is fundamentally important. I would encourage all Members to support the legislation.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LAHOOD). All time has expired.

The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BARTON) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 2884, as amended.

The question was taken.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBER TO NATIONAL SKILL STANDARDS BOARD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Without objection, pursuant to Section 503(b)(3) of the National Skill Standards Act of 1994 (20 U.S.C. 5933), and upon the recommendation of the majority leader, the Chair announces the Speaker's appointment of the following member on the part of the House to the National Skill Standards Board for a 4-year

term to fill the existing vacancy thereon:

Mr. William L. Lepley, Hershey, Pennsylvania.

There was no objection.

SO LONG TO SYLVAN RODRIGUEZ, ONE OF HOUSTON'S NATIVE SONS

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, first let me offer my deepest concern and sympathy for the Marines who lost their lives on behalf of this Nation, and to a native son from Houston and his family.

This morning, Mr. Speaker, I rise to salute and acknowledge Sylvan Rodriguez, a "minister of information," a local news anchor for Channel 11 news in Houston, Texas, who passed away last week. Sylvan Rodriguez was an anchor for 23 years, but what we know him most for, those of us who watched him in the community, is as a caring deliverer of the news, someone who believed that the news should be informational but passionate and compassionate.

He died from cancer. The viewers of Channel 11 will miss him and the Houston Community will miss him.

Rodriguez was born in San Antonio, Texas, on March 20, 1948. He came to Houston in 1977. He went to Los Angeles but returned to our Houston family in 1987. He anchored the noon and 6:00 p.m. newscast. He reported on major issues in our community.

He was a founding member of the I Have a Dream Foundation, but most importantly, Mr. Speaker, he loved his family and his community. I salute him and my regrets and sympathy go to his wife; his two daughters; his son; his stepson; and as well his stepdaughter; his mother and three brothers and sister in Louisiana.

Mr. Speaker, we have lost a valued leader, a member of the Houston Community who will be remembered as much for how much he cared for people as for his professional approval to delivering the news to us. Sylvan Rodriguez through his work was a friend to us all, he will be missed by our entire city.

Mr. Speaker, I rise to commemorate the life of Mr. Sylvan Rodriguez, distinguished Houston news anchor, journalist and community activist. Mr. Rodriguez recently passed away after a bout with cancer.

Since the shattering news of his illness, Sylvan showed determination and courage. Instead of turning inward when this disease was diagnosed, Sylvan realized that he could play a special role in educating the community about cancer, its devastation, and one's ability to survive. Sylvan continued to educate the Houston Community about cancer and tirelessly raised funds for numerous charities while still fighting this horrific disease.

More than one of Houston's most beloved news anchor and journalist; Sylvan was a

leader in the community and dedicated his life's work to making this world a better place than the way he found it. Sylvan was a very special person and meant a lot to all who knew him. He loved people and he made us better because he educated and challenged us!

At this time, I do not think Sylvan would have wanted the Houston communities to anguish over his passing; instead, he would want all of us to pick up the torch of leadership and responsibility, and work together to ensure that our communities continue to grow and learn from one another, and to continue God's work.

Nevertheless, Sylvan's passing will forever leave a void in all of our hearts in Houston, and throughout the great state of Texas. I hope that in time, his family, friends, and colleagues are comforted by the legacy of accomplishments Sylvan leaves behind. In addition, I hope that fond memories of Sylvan Rodriguez will continue to inspire all who knew him and the Houston community for the future. In closing, I offer my deepest sympathy on Sylvan Rodriguez passing and bid him a fond farewell.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

□ 1800

MICROSOFT BREAK-UP

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. LATOURETTE). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Washington (Mr. BAIRD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BAIRD. Mr. Speaker, we are a Nation of laws. Without a codified, uniform, and fairly administered systems of laws, American society would be harmed, lives would be ruined and businesses would falter and fail.

I also know that our system is not perfect. Sometimes it is possible for existing laws to be misapplied or misinterpreted. Sometimes it is possible for reasonable men and women to look at the same set of facts and to simply draw different conclusions. And sometimes our very human and very American desire to side with the little guy overwhelms our objectivity and colors our view of the facts; that I believe is happening in the case of Microsoft versus the Department of Justice.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that Microsoft is being unfairly judged, not only in the federal courtroom, but also in the court of public opinion, and I believe this good company stands a chance of being unfairly punished. That is why I am here today to do what I can to stop an injustice from occurring.

Microsoft is the great American success story. Today, it is a company whose products have increased the effi-

ciency of our work force immeasurably. It is a company whose products are used and respected worldwide. It is a company who has shared more of its wealth creation with its workers than any other business in this country. It is a company whose founder has made more charitable contributions than any other business leader in the entire world.

And this American success story is under attack today, because it wanted to offer better products to its customers in order to stay competitive. That seems absurd to me. Even more absurd is the precedent that this decision would set for all of American business, because the attack on Microsoft is not simply an attack on a single very successful company.

It is an attack on the very principles of business competition and technological innovation. It is an attack that threatens to undermine one of the most successful engines of economic growth and technological innovation in our Nation.

One of the first rules of business is to anticipate changing markets, to predict what competitors will do, and try to do better. The way to win in a competitive marketplace is to produce better products more quickly and more economically. That is the basis of our free enterprise system. It is why our economy leads the world, and it is why we are the envy of the rest of the world.

It is a terribly, terribly serious matter for the government to intrude in that process of healthy competition. And it is simply not acceptable or reasonable for our government to seek to destroy a fundamental engine of our economy.

Microsoft is a generous and responsible corporate citizen, one of the most innovative and creative success stories in American history. Microsoft should not be attacked simply because they sought to provide more integrated, advanced, and efficient products to the marketplace, that is what consumers want companies to do. Far from harming consumers, that is what consumers want from products that and the companies that make them.

The theory behind antitrust actions is to prevent monopolistic or anti-competitive practices that could stifle development or competition and thereby hurt the consumer.

I understand that principle, but the key phrase is thereby hurt the consumer. And what is most important to consider here is not whether there is a specific level of competition, but whether consumers have, in fact, been harmed.

It is equally important that we carefully, very carefully, examine the possibility that a proposed response, a proposed response could be more harmful to consumers, more harmful to competition. Let us be clear about some-

thing. It is perfectly acceptable to ensure the competition is not unfairly restrained by monopolistic entities. But it is not acceptable, it is not reasonable to use the antitrust process to penalize companies for trying to improve their products for the sake of competitive advantage.

If protecting the consumer is the guiding principle behind antitrust proceedings, it is only fair to ask where the consumers have been in all of this. From the time this process began, right up to the present, there has not been an uprising of consumers demanding Microsoft being prosecuted or penalized.

In fact, consumers use and benefit from Microsoft products every day. And when it comes to choices, consumers have a multitude of choices of various software systems and operating systems.

Competition is alive and well in the software industry. Beyond the matter of choice in consumer satisfaction, it would be difficult to argue that prices have been driven up by Microsoft because every day the price of computer systems and more powerful systems are actually going down.

What is really going on? The case against Microsoft is not fundamentally about protecting consumers, it is really about competing businesses in the States in which those businesses reside seeking to get the upper hand on one another by using litigation where innovation has failed, by using the power of the government to usurp the power of the marketplace.

Our Federal Government should not be party to this, and our government must not stifle competition in the name of protecting consumers. Break up should not be an option.

Mr. Speaker, I have visited Microsoft. I know well the fine work they do, and I know how essential it is for the success of that company that products be integrated. We must not allow break up to harm consumers in the name of protecting them.

COMMEMORATING THE 85TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ARMENIAN GENOCIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHERWOOD). Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Maryland (Mrs. MORELLA) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, tomorrow evening on this floor there will be a special order commemorating the 85th anniversary of the Armenian Genocide. I will not be present because of a conflict tomorrow evening, and, therefore, I chose this evening to rise in remembrance of all of those who perished during the Armenian Genocide. The commemoration of the Turkish persecution of its Armenian citizens is important because only by educating